

Information Link

A Source of Information for Our Customers



Curtis L. Wolfe

I reported on the results of the 2005 Legislative Session and its impact on information technology (IT) in state government in the last issue of *Information Link*. We are now well into the current biennium and are heavily engaged in the deployment of several multi-million dollar IT projects. I would like to update you on the progress related to four of these projects: Mainframe Migration, the Tax Department's Enhanced Tax System, the Medicaid (MMIS) Replacement, and the Network Upgrade procurement effort.

Mainframe Migration

There has been significant discussion within ITD and in front of several legislative committees regarding the migration from the mainframe to alternative hardware. We hope mainframe migration will achieve several objectives: reduce costs for our customers, move towards achieving the future vision developed within the enterprise architecture process, and address the skill sets needed within ITD to support that vision. We are conducting a feasibility study, working with Software AG, to confirm the technical viability of the migration and to develop a return on investment document (ROI) that validates the financial assumptions we have projected. We should have this initial analysis complete and the ROI document available in October 2005. At that time, we will decide whether we should move forward with the project.

Integrated Tax System Project (TREND – Tax Revenue Excellence for North Dakota)

The Tax Department earlier this year selected FAST Enterprises as the vendor of choice to implement their GenTax System to address the needs of the Department for an integrated tax system. This project was initiated July 5, 2005, and is well underway. The FAST project team as well as the ITD staff assigned to the project are located in Northbrook Mall. The intent is to have this project completed by the end of the biennium.

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All of these projects require a strong commitment from ITD and will significantly affect our workload for the rest of this biennium.

Medicaid (MMIS) System Replacement Project

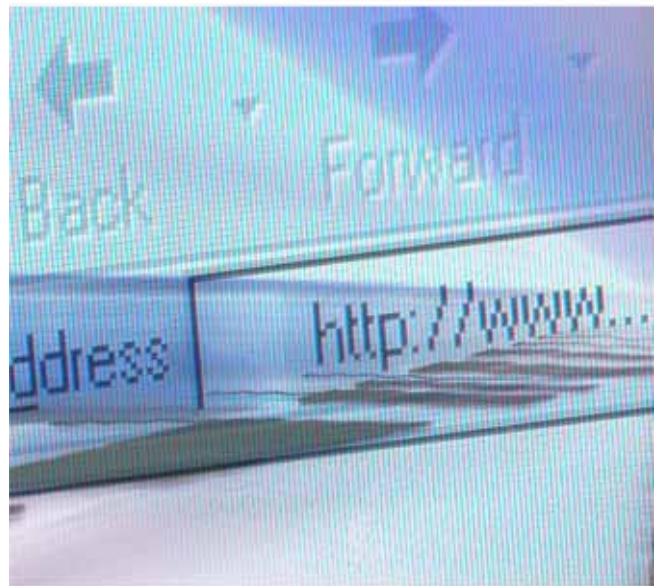
The Department of Human Services (DHS) is currently evaluating proposals for the following: a replacement system for MMIS, a point-of-sale system, and a decision support system/data warehouse system; as well as proposals for an independent verification and validation vendor(s) that is required for the program office, verification, validation, and audit. Proposal evaluations are underway and vendor contracts are expected to be in place by December 2005. ITD is a significant partner with DHS in the systems replacement project.

StageNet Upgrade Project

The ITD Telecommunications Division is heavily engaged in issuing Request For Proposals (RFP) and evaluating responses related to three procurement efforts. First, we are re-bidding the network transport, which includes the backbone, local and Internet access. Our objective for this particular procurement is more bandwidth, better security, reduced latency, and increased mobility. The bids for this have been submitted and the evaluation and negotiations are on-going.

The second procurement effort is comprised of network equipment such as routers, switches, and video devices that will be available at significant discounts. Several firms submitted bids, and three of them were selected as finalists for contract awards.

The third procurement effort consists of voice and data wireless access to the network that we hope will eventually lead to ubiquitous coverage across the state. This RFP is on the street with responses due back in October 2005. We are hopeful that this procurement effort will help encourage better statewide wireless coverage and at the same time meet our needs for agency wireless access to information.



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ITD's Service Desk is designed to be the "Single Point of Contact" for providing customers with advice, guidance, and the rapid restoration of services.

ITD's Service Desk: Your "Single Point of Contact"

Gary J. Vetter, Customer Services Director

Remember when IT was easy? (Bear with me – it was a long time ago!) There were not too many technical alternatives, and there were not too many people working to provide them. When someone needed help, they pretty much knew who to call and what type of solution would be offered.

Today, technical options are abundant. And IT departments have grown into a maze filled with both specialists and generalists. Trying to find the right person, with the right answer, at the right time, can be frustrating.

ITD can help! Its traditional help desk is being transformed into a customer-focused "Service Desk" that combines interpersonal skills, technical expertise, and business awareness. This new breed of support structure not only handles incidents and questions, but also provides an interface for other business activities, including customer work orders, requests for change, problem root-cause analysis, and service level management.

ITD's Service Desk is designed to be the "Single Point of Contact" for providing customers with advice, guidance, and the rapid restoration of services.

Having a "Single Point of Contact" offers many advantages:

- Customers no longer need to understand and navigate ITD's organizational structure.
- All customer contacts are documented and managed.
- Service support and delivery are more consistent.
- Trend reporting and root-cause analysis help reduce recurring incidents.
- Resolution time is improved through efficient and effective use of technical staff.
- Customers have access to a wider range of specialized skills.
- Areas for improving customer experiences are easily identified.

ITD is focused on being a "customer-centric" organization, and the Service Desk is where it all begins. Customers are strongly encouraged to utilize ITD's Service Desk as their "Single Point of Contact" for all IT service related issues.



ITD's Service Desk can be reached anytime at (701) 328-4470 or (800) 837-9807.

Accelerate Your IT Career

If you need a project manager for your next IT project, ITD can help!

Learn how to advance your career and add more value to your clients and users by attending the 2005 IT Forum featuring Paul Glen's *Accelerating Your Career in Information Technology*, slated for October 12, 2005, from 9-10:30 a.m., at the Heritage Center Auditorium, state capitol grounds.

Glen, an award winning author, Computerworld columnist, and professional speaker, will share his 12-point framework strategy to help you deliver more successful projects and enhance your client relationships.

If you are unable to attend this event in person, a live webcast will be featured at <http://www.state.nd.us/ea/forums>. For more information about this forum, please contact Dirk Huggett, ITD Policy and Planning Division, at (701) 328-1998 or dhuggett@state.nd.us.



Editor's note: Paul Glen is frequently cited as one of the industry's most thought-provoking and entertaining speakers who helps technical organizations improve the quality of their leadership and helps technical managers advance their careers.

Glen's book *Leading Geeks: How to Manage and Lead People Who Deliver Technology* received several book awards including the 2003 Financial Times Germany International Book Prize. You can read more about his book by visiting www.leadinggeeks.com. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member in the MBA program at the University of Southern California.

Do You Need a Project Manager?

Vern Welder

The answer is always "yes." Every project needs to be managed! The level of project management required is variable based on each project's complexity. Project sponsors need to assure that someone is responsible for planning, communicating, coordinating and executing project tasks, and meeting timelines. Otherwise, the project team can flounder and fail.

If you need a project manager for your next IT project, ITD can help! ITD now offers IT project management services. ITD has experienced project managers on staff who can manage entire projects or they can assist your project manager by managing specific aspects of a project.

If you are interested in more details about project management services, please contact Dave Eckenrode at 328-7388 or deckenrode@state.nd.us.

Citizens feel more comfortable knowing they are visiting an official government site when they search for government information.

nd.gov Portal Released

Vern Welder

nd.gov recently replaced discovernd.com as North Dakota's official web portal. Following is information for state agencies to consider regarding the .gov domain name and the new nd.gov web page banner.

Citizens feel more comfortable knowing they are visiting an official government site when they search for government information. Only government sites are allowed to use the .gov domain. Therefore, please consider using the .gov domain name when improving or replacing your agency's web site. Currently, 47 states use the .gov domain on their state portals.

There is no hurry to update URLs on agency letterhead, business cards, etc. discovernd.com and www.state.nd.us will re-direct to nd.gov for some time to come.

The new web page banner now has color options so you can choose text and background colors that compliment the look of your agency's web pages.

Thank you to everyone who provided advice and assistance during nd.gov development and for feedback after the release.

Liquid Office: The State's Electronic Forms Solution

Sharon Freeman

Forms, Forms, Forms...they are everywhere! Statistics from Gartner, a leading provider of IT research and analysis, indicate that 80 percent of business documents are forms. Nearly all business information originates from forms. Therefore, it is imperative that forms be designed and configured to provide the most efficient and economical means possible.

Many of the state's forms are still paper-based. Paper forms are expensive and inefficient, yet they continue to be used. Cost savings regarding electronic vs. paper systems can be shown in a study conducted by Bill Gates. This study showed that the cost of printing and storing **paper** forms was \$15 per form; and the cost of filing, processing, and keying **paper** forms was \$145 per form. The study showed the cost of printing and storing **electronic** forms was \$1 per form; and the cost of filing, processing, and keying **electronic** forms was \$5 per form. The cost savings of using an electronic form vs. a paper form is \$154 per form. (Reference cited: Bill Gates, *Business at the Speed of Thought: Succeeding in the Digital Economy*, 1999.)

Electronic forms (e-forms) provide many benefits and functionality that paper forms cannot provide. These benefits include:

- Automatic data gathering and capture activities.
- Improvement in accuracy of submitted data by configuring validations, calculations, and lookups.

The State has a product called Texcel FormBridge that can take forms that have been created in almost any format and convert them to a Liquid Office form.

- Auto-fill capabilities which pull information from existing data sources or user profiles and automatically places the information in the appropriate field on the form.
- Submission of data to the business application database, therefore, eliminating data entry activities.
- Electronic/digital signature support.

The State uses Verity Liquid Office as its e-forms solution. The Liquid Office solution provides the following functionality:

- Ability to complete, sign, route, process, and store forms electronically.
- Ability to automatically fill certain fields from user profiles.
- Accessibility to the forms via a friendly URL or through the Liquid Office repository.
- Routing of forms.
- Publication of forms as HTML or PDF.
- Support for electronic signatures.
- Export of data to business application databases.
- Calculations and validations of fields.
- Storage of record copies in FileNet.

To view the Liquid Office repository, go to <http://itdefor.ms.itd.nd.gov>. To log into the system, use your NDGOV user name (or ID) and password. Forms are stored under individual agency folders. Currently, there are a limited number of forms in the system.

The State has a product called Texcel FormBridge that can take forms that have been created in almost any format and convert them to a Liquid Office form.

Please contact ITD Records Management for additional information on Liquid Office and to discuss any specific recommendations for your agency's forms.

On The Job For ITD

Working as a Contingency Planner for ITD, Larry Lee's primary responsibility is helping to develop and administer the agency's disaster recovery plan, along with providing the administration and support of the Living Disaster Recovery Planning System (LDRPS), Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) administration, and ClearCase administration. Larry, who has worked for ITD for 26 years, said he enjoys working with people and the state agencies.



Larry has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of North Dakota.



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Digital Preservation – Something to Consider

Bill Roach, Certified Records Manager

The Library of Congress recently sponsored a forum featuring digital preservation. Three representatives from the archives of each state or territory were invited to participate in one of three meetings conducted by the Library. North Dakota's representatives were Gerald Newborg, State Archivist; Doris Ott, State Librarian; and myself. Members from several federal agencies who are involved in either digital preservation policy or activities also attended.

The purpose of the forum was to begin a dialog with the states on issues relating to preservation of "born digital" documents. For the last 2500 years, documents retained for future generations were saved in papyrus, parchment, and paper. Today, archives across the world often have documents that are hundreds or even thousands of years old. But due to rapid advances in technology, it is very likely that future generations will know little about today. While we produce nearly as much information each year as has been generated in recorded history, we currently lack the ability to maintain it for even a single generation.

Participants in the forum spent time discussing which types of information are most valuable and most at risk. The group's consensus was that the issue is not going to go away. Instead, the cycle for development and deployment of successive technologies continues to shrink. In the meantime, current preservation methods continue to be focused on paper-based information.

Finding a solution will require both funding for research and educating the public.

Collectively, we need to find a solution for long-term preservation of digital documents. Without it, our grandchildren may know less about us than they know about the folks

who fought the Revolutionary War. Something to think about the next time you pop a memory stick into your digital camera.

